

# HERBERT T. SINGER COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD Amsterdam Rotary

Center: Amsterdam Rotary President  
Morgan McClary and right VP Brittany Kolbe



When the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce announced the recipient of its annual Herbert T. Singer Community Service Award, it recognized more than a single year of volunteerism. It honors a legacy of selfless dedication — the very spirit embodied by Herbert T. Singer himself. In 2026, that distinction belongs to the Amsterdam Rotary Club, a group whose members have quietly and consistently shaped the quality of life across Montgomery County, and our region.

The Herbert T. Singer Community Service Award is bestowed upon individuals or organizations that demonstrate an enduring commitment to enhancing their community. Singer and his brothers were pioneers in direct mail and founders of Amsterdam Printing & Litho. Yet his business acumen was matched by civic devotion. He served on the Amsterdam school board, helped found the Amsterdam Community Chest — a precursor to the United Way — assisted in launching the Greater Amsterdam Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and became only the third Amsterdamian to achieve the highest degree of Masonry. His life set a standard of service above self.

That same philosophy defines the Amsterdam Rotary Club.

“We are incredibly proud to receive this award,” said Rotary President Morgan McClary (2025–2026). “It’s an honor. And it’s a testament to all the work our group has been doing for years in the community.”

With approximately 50 members — and several new additions in recent months — Amsterdam Rotary is one of the most active clubs in the region and currently the only Rotary club in Montgomery County. Membership is

open to community members willing to serve; individuals do not need to own a business, but they must be sponsored by a current Rotarian. The common denominator is a desire to help and a readiness to put in the work.

“It’s good work, fun work, and very rewarding,” McClary said. “It’s given me the opportunity to meet and connect with people I might not even have met otherwise.”

Under McClary’s leadership, the club has expanded its outreach across the county while ramping up marketing and social media efforts to ensure the community knows Rotary is ready to help. At 34, McClary represents a generational shift within the club. Traditionally skewing older, Rotary has intentionally worked recently to engage young professionals in their 30s and 40s.

“Older generations need younger people to get involved,” she said. “It’s incredibly important to build that next wave of leadership, while carrying on the successful and time-honored traditions that have shaped our Club and the work it does.”

That leadership transition is already in motion. McClary succeeded Kara Travis, and Vice President Brittany Kolbe is slated to become president this summer — marking new generations of leadership guiding the club forward.

One of this year’s standout initiatives was a brand-new fundraiser: an Adult Prom, themed “Silver Screen Soirée.” The idea sparked casually around a backyard firepit during a summer Rotary After Hours gathering. In her day job with Montgomery County, McClary frequently fields funding requests for high school after-prom parties — vital programs that keep teens safe on prom night. The Rotary team saw an opportunity: host a winter formal for adults and direct proceeds to youth after-prom programs.

Chaired by Kolbe and organized by a dedicated committee, the event exceeded expectations, raising approximately \$17,000 — surpassing its original goal. Proceeds will be split among after-prom programs in Fonda, Amsterdam, Canajoharie, and Fort Plain. (OESJ currently does not have an after-prom program.) Businesses contributed sponsorships and raffle baskets, and Rotarians from Schenectady even attended, later remarking on the enthusiasm driving the club. “Every little bit really counted,” McClary said. “We’re so proud. The proceeds from the event will make a meaningful difference to youth all over Montgomery County.”

The Adult Prom joins Rotary’s robust slate of annual fundraisers, including the return of the beloved Fish Fry, and the club’s largest event of the year — the Variety Show. Last year’s show raised nearly \$100,000 for beneficiaries including Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care, the Amsterdam High School Marching Rams, St. Mary’s Institute and Rotary Youth Scholarships. This year’s recipients will be New Dimensions in Healthcare, Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, the Foundation of St. Mary’s Healthcare, the Amsterdam High School Drama Club, and of course their Rotary Youth Scholarships. This year’s cast call is set for March 25, with organizers hopeful it will be the biggest production yet.

At the heart of every decision lies Rotary’s guiding principle: Service Above Self. McClary leads using Rotary’s Four-Way Test as a moral framework: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

“If I follow these,” she said, “I know I’m on the right track.”

Equally important to her leadership style is transparency and empowerment. McClary prioritizes open communication and ensuring members have the information they need to make sound decisions. She actively solicits ideas from newer members, asking about their passions and encouraging fresh perspectives.

That openness shaped her own Rotary journey. Sponsored by past president Anne Boles in April 2022, McClary credits the club with pushing her beyond her comfort zone — even onto a stage to sing and dance in front of hundreds during the Variety Show.

“I’ve been able to track my growth personally and professionally because of this group,” she said. “They helped me find my voice and my confidence.”

Rotary’s strength, she emphasizes, lies in its teamwork. Members bring diverse skill sets — from fundraising expertise to set construction. One member might build stage sets; another might arrive with a trailer full of hay bales when needed. Most members juggle careers and other commitments, yet they show up consistently for one another and for the community.

“You don’t find that everywhere,” McClary said. “When you have it, you know how impactful it can be.”

Looking ahead, McClary hopes the community sees Rotarians for who they truly are. “Rotarians are your neighbors, your public servants, your nurses, small business owners — regular people who want to help,” she said. “We’re everywhere. And we’re willing to step up for our community.”

